

Safety planning and numerous safety details were attended to throughout the year. All annual safety planning was completed and copies were distributed prior to the field season. Several trees at the field headquarters identified as hazardous were removed. Other safety related work included posting new 'No Smoking' signs in our field fuel storage area, checking fire extinguishers, organizing and maintaining safety equipment, conducting follow-up practice with firearms, and continual procedural training.

7. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance was provided throughout the year on an as requested basis to various Federal, State, and local government agencies. Continual assistance was provided to the Alaska Division of Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Protection, and Fish and Game Departments. Several of our key biological projects, including the development of our new moose survey and vegetative cover mapping from remote sensing technology, resulted in requests for information from other agencies. The Bureau of Land Management is particularly interested in this work.

WB Skinner expended considerable time throughout the year working on technical publications designed to provide assistance to other entities relative to the development and application of remote sensing technology. Specifically, these projects included publications regarding habitat mapping, wildlife population surveys, and a waterbody classification system.

In addition to the publications work, WB Skinner provided on-site assistance several times throughout the year. WB Skinner met with WB Gene Peltola at the Selawik NWR on June 7th to help with their baseline plant community sampling project. Field sampling techniques were developed and field tested. Later in June, WB Skinner met with WB Buddy Johnson at the Koyukuk/Nowitna NWR Complex to help with plant community mapping of the Nowitna NWR fire/furbearer study area and the upper unit of the Innoko NWR. WB Skinner travelled to the Yukon Flats NWR the week of July 5th to work with WB Mark Bertram in designing a plant community and fuels mapping plan.

RM Merritt met with Mary Lu Harle, Region 7 Water Resources Branch, on July 6th to review the station's water resources threats analysis exercise conducted in late June. Concerns included the impacts of both historical and current placer mining, the potential for future minerals extraction activity, and road construction. Later in the year, RM Merritt served on a regional committee to develop a weighting process for evaluating threats and assigning work and funding priorities.

8. Other items

Training

In April, all permanent staff members participated in Quality Improvement training. The training session was conducted in

McGrath at the Takusko House Lodge on April 6th. The course was well presented by Regional Quality Improvement Team member Bill Seitz and the staff response was generally favorable.

AT Collins attended a pre-retirement seminar in Anchorage on May 25th and 26th. The training provided meaningful insight relative to financial planning for retirement. Collins assisted in preparing for the regional administrative workshop in May. She then attended the workshop, which was conducted in Wasilla the week of May 17th, and presented a session on financial tracking to the group.

RM Merritt attended a course in aviation management conducted by the Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) in Anchorage the week of May 26th. This session provided attendees with a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both OAS and managers overseeing aviation programs. Merritt also attended cultural diversity training in Fairbanks May 4th through the 6th. This was an excellent program focusing on Native Alaskan cultures.

BT Mallek attended the new employee orientation program at the Egan Center in Anchorage the week of May 11th.

DM Reid, WB/P Finley, AT Collins, and BT Mallek attended a 15-hour intermediate course on Windows 3.1 software offered as a one-credit class at the University of Alaska rural college in McGrath in October.

Administrative Details:

A station visit was conducted by Assistant Regional Director Rowan Gould and Deputy Associate Manager (Staff) Art Wemmerus on August 25th and 26th. We felt that the visit was very productive. The time was well spent discussing this station's approach to habitat management through the use of remote sensing technology. We were able to host Art on a flight over the Refuge, including a visit to the field headquarters, assisting him in understanding our operational needs.

AT Collins and RM Merritt expended considerable time and effort early in the year manipulating the Lotus financial tracking system to generate meaningful budget reports in the financial spreadsheet. While some progress was realized, this system continues to fall short of our expectations; a problem that is shared with other stations and was seriously discussed at the project leader meeting in November. A workgroup consisting of both regional and field personnel was assigned to work on the problem at year's end. Hopefully, a solution will be forthcoming.

BT Mallek prepared and assisted during an independently verified accountable property inventory required by the regional office. Regional Fire Management Coordinator (RFMC) Red Sheldon visited McGrath on April 19th to conduct the first half of the survey, which consisted of verifying all items located in McGrath. Our